

Senator Bye and other members of the Higher Education Committee,

I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is John Young. I am the Director of IT Support Services at Southern Connecticut State University and I am also the SCSU Chapter President of SUOAF-AFSCME, the State University Organization of Administrative Faculty. I have been an employee of Southern for 34 years and have witnessed numerous changes, including the migration from College to University and the creation of the Connecticut State University System Office.

In my almost 35 years at Southern, I have also witnessed one constant: For a University with approximately 13,000 students, Southern has always prided itself on its incredible sense of family and camaraderie on campus, which exists between all members of the campus community including faculty, staff, and students.

When I look at Senate Bill 1011, I am concerned about the very different missions and environments between the Community Colleges and the State Universities. While I appreciate and applaud the mission of the Community Colleges, especially for the remarkable job they do in providing career based training, it is essential to understand that the mission of the individual State Universities, as unique comprehensive higher education units, is very different. That being said, it is also important to understand that the student experience in the State University system is very different. At Southern, we have over 3000 students living in our residence halls. We require services on a 24X7 basis, including basic student services, food services, police services, health services, athletic facilities, utilities, heat, electricity, communications services including phones, cable, and internet services. During our Fall and Spring semesters, our campus basically functions as a small city. And this is all in addition to the outstanding academic and student support environment which we provide for all 13,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

While it is not clear how a merger of the Boards of Trustees will actually work and how it will affect our collective student populations, I believe that any attempt to merge our academic or campus functions operationally with the Community College system could be potentially very damaging. Because of the conflicting missions and conflicting student experiences, I believe that a functional merger would be disruptive, chaotic, and most likely very costly. It will **not** produce the vast and immediate savings that would be hoped for. But what is worse than being financially counter-productive (and that is bad enough) is that it could totally destroy the student centered experience that we all strive for on our campus. Because at Southern, our students are more than just students. They are the most important members of our family.

Thank you.

John Young

Director of IT Support Services

Chapter President of SUOAF-AFSCME

Southern Connecticut State University